

## ABSTRACT

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The present volume intend to offer a „gender-sensitive” image on the relationship between women and the labour market in 2003 Romania. The vast majority of gender policies which aims at labour market have started from the political power in force at one moment in Romania. The approach proposed by this volume is a different one, because one has considered that the initiative to propose such solutions has to take into account the target-group which those measures aimed - the Romanian women. More precisely, for the initiators of those studies and recommendations, the key-problem was: What are the types of gender-sensitive public policies that are able both to maximize women’s access to the Romanian labour market and to promote „positive discrimination” at the work place? A series of specific problems was subordinated to the above-mentioned ones:

4. How do women define the obstacles and opportunities of their access at the waged labour market in Romania? In this case the interest layed in the opinions, assessments and beliefs of a target-group from the Romanian feminine population regarding the real enactment of the principle of equality of chances and treatment between men and women on the labour market;
5. Where can be identified the „weak points” in the application of the legislation on the equality of chances and treatment between men and women on the labour market in Romania? A comparison was made between the legal provisions regarding the issue of equality of chances and treatment between women and men and the critical aspects raised by the women to whom the legislation aimed.
6. What are the real possibilities of action in favour of the development of women’s access to the labour market in Romania? The answer at this question took the shape of some real recommendations of action that were proposed for analysis to the state’s institutions and organizations involved in the field of equality of chances and treatment between genders on the labour market.

In the first part of the volume the reasons for choosing a certain approach to the social issues are presented by large. It was considered that, in order to offer an answer at those questions one has to develop an approach which related the macro-social situation with the one presented at middle-social level –the situation of a „target-group” of Romanian women. In this respect, the present set of recommendations (policy-papers) was centered around a joint analysis of three domains:

A. *The legislation domain* – in this case it was analysed the Romanian legislation in force in 2003 regarding the principle of equality of chances and treatment between men and women on the labour market (see the Annexes at the end of the present volume).

B. *The domain of the Romanian gendered social reality* - taking into account the practical dimension of the set of recommendations that was proposed at the end, this was the point of maximum interest for the initiators of the present volume. A research project was developed that tried a „diagnosis” as accurate as possible on the gendered situation of the equality of chances and treatment of the labour market. For this purpose it was used a combination of social data that existed at three levels:

1. A first level was represented by the official statistical data series regarding the period 1990-2002. These pointed to a series of „negative” elements in the general characteriza-tion of

the real state of affairs regarding women's access and participation at the labour market for the period of time considered.

2. The second level of the research project was made of the population's opinions, expectations and beliefs regarding a series of issues that are gender-sensitive.
3. The third level of analysis was a middle-social one. Despite the fact that it used mainly the focus-group as the method to collect and interpret the empirical data, this kind of approach made possible an analysis and an explanation centered on the social phenomena at the „community” level which is „focused on the punctual situation, this proving to be more profitable from a qualitative point of view even in the case of a more general social problem”.

In the second part of the volume is presented the Research Report: „The Access of Women at the Labour Market”, made by The Gallup Organization Romania for the Partnership for Equality Center, in April 2003. The objectives of this research were:

1. The assessment of the studied population's level of knowledge regarding the rights women have on the labour market;
2. The identification of the problems regarding the women's access to the labour market;
3. The assessment of the level of knowledge of women's economic opportunities;
4. The identification of the key-elements of the ways of intervention at the local community level;
5. The identification of the degree of involvement and risk assumed at the individual level;
6. The identification of real (present and future) difficulties, as they are perceived by the population considered;
7. The identification of concrete ways of intervention at the collective (local) level and at the personal one;
8. The identification of the future domains in which women's involvement in the private sector of the economy can be made;
9. The identification of those necessary types of social services related to women's access at the labour market which can be made.

The Research Report was made on the debates which took place during the focus-group sessions in eight locations in Romania: Alexandria, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Reșița, Satu Mare, Târgu Mureș, Roman, Bârlad, Năvodari and presents in seven chapters the analysis of the problems related to the conditions of the women's access at the labour market (knowledge of rights, their enactment, facing the discriminatory employment practices etc). Individual and collective strategies which can contribute to facilitate the women's access at the labour market are identified, as well as services, measures and opportunities which, in the view of the population studied, can help women to find more easily a work-place.

In the third part of the volume there are enclosed a series of policy-papers subordinated to the main theme: „Women and the Labour Market”. The recommendations were structured around some „cores” of interest from a gender-sensitive point of view:

- E.** The official labour market - women's access at the waged work;
- F.** The unemployment - in the sense of ceasing the waged work;
- G.** The family - the influence „the socialization according to the patriarchal pattern” exercised on the understanding of women's role as mothers, wives and working persons outside their households (in the public sector of the waged work);

- H.** The community - the identification of mechanisms in the favor of maximizing the women's „positive discrimination”, of the key-factors in favor of increasing the chances of women's economic association at the local level.

Synthetically, the recommendations stated the following aspects:

***1. At the legislative level:***

A. The correction of the legal provisions in force in the domain of labour, through the introduction of a set of special stipulations regarding women's work. Those have to stress the elements and measures of women's "positive discrimination" on the labour market, especially through the incentives for the employers to hire an equal ratio of feminine and masculine labour-force on the basis of the same education level.

B. The approval of some legal stipulations in favor of stimulating women's economic private initiative and association in order to set up "small enterprises" (organized and managed by women), especially in the production sphere;

C. The completion of the existing legal framework and the introduction of new provisions in the labour domain in order to provide the promotion of unemployed women's professional training;

D. The approval of a set of legislative measures through which the employers (both from the private and the state sector) are stimulated to organize sessions of training (with the financial help of the state) and to activate "positive discrimination policies" to employ women in the local enterprises.

***2. At the institutional level:***

A. The re-drawing and re-distribution of the institutional support for the employed and waged women - through the organization of a network of institutions to sustain their children (creches, kindergardens, boarding schools);

B. The organization through the local councils and mayoralities of training sessions in order to professional qualify the women who are under the incidence of effects of economic restructuring policies. The initiative to organize those sessions will belong to a council made from the representatives of the women's local NGO's and the representatives of the local public administration. The funds for those actions will come both from the would-be employers and the local budget;

C. The settlement of county Offices of the Equality of Chances Direction from the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family. They will monitor the implementation of the principle of equality of chances and treatment between men and women at local and regional levels.

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***3. At the level of mass media and civil society:***

A. Development of a campaign centered around the theme of promoting the "positive examples" of working women. The main means used in this campaign will be the local media, especially the local and regional newspapers and magazines;

B. Carrying out of an informative campaign aiming also at sensitizing the public opinion regarding the principle of equality of chances between men and women. Newspapers' articles and radio and TV programmes in the local and regional media will be used as channels of communication during that campaign.